BRITISH COLUMBIA
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BC Stats

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Current Statistics ◆ January 2009

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate rose 0.4 percentage points to 5.3% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December as a result of a shrinking number of jobs (–0.3%) and a slight expansion in the size of the labour force (+0.1%).** This marks the fifth consecutive month in which the province has failed to see an increase in the number of jobs. Nationally, unemployment rose to 6.6% in December due to a large drop in full-time employment. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Employment in the province's goods producing industries inched ahead 0.2% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December after shedding workers in each of the two previous months.** Forestry, fishing & mining (+11.2%) and manufacturing (+1.8%) added 8,400 people to their payrolls. However, this increase was dampened by the roughly 8,100 workers in utilities (–9.4%) and construction (–3.1%) that lost their jobs.

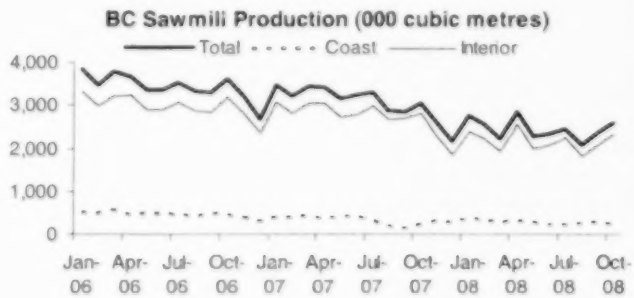
  In the service sector, employment slipped 0.5% as seven industries cut back their workforce in December. Transportation & warehousing (+9.2%), accommodation & food (+3.3%) and retail & wholesale trade (+2.3%) all experienced high-to-moderate levels of employment growth, but these gains were overshadowed by the 32,900 lost jobs in the remaining service industries. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Housing starts in the province climbed (+8.0%, *seasonally adjusted*) in December, reversing just some of the hefty 27.2% decline recorded in November.** New home building activity was down in five provinces with declines ranging from 2.3% in Alberta to 25.3% in Saskatchewan. Canadian starts were off 0.4%, as the decrease was moderated by upsurges in BC, Ontario (+8.1%), Manitoba (+11.1%) and parts of Atlantic Canada. *Data Source: CMHC*

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities dropped sharply (-28.9%, *seasonally adjusted*) in November, following a 6.3% decrease in October.** Non-residential permits tumbled (-34.6%), eroding much of the previous month's (+32.6%) gain, while the value of residential permits fell (-22.9%) for the third consecutive month. Kelowna (-12.1%), Victoria (-18.5%), Vancouver (-22.1%) and Abbotsford (49.3%) all saw double-digit declines.

  Nationally, permits slumped 11.8%, as seven provinces recorded declines. Non-residential permits were off 15.2%, while the value of residential projects (-9.0%) was also down. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Sawmills and planing mills in the province produced 15.0% less lumber this October than in the same month last year.** Mills in the Interior slowed their output substantially (–17.1%), but production at coastal mills was up (+11.1%). Canadian production was also down (–15.3%), as volume was off in most lumber-producing provinces. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*



- **The value of BC exports slipped 4.3% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November of last year, the most significant month-over-month decline since March.** Exports to the US were down 3.6%, ending two months of gains. The decrease in US-bound

exports was fuelled in part by a substantial downturn in shipments of industrial & consumer products (–12.9%), but exports of forestry (–1.2%), energy (–2.2%) and agriculture & fishing (–3.2%) products also declined. Shipments to other countries continued to see-saw (–4.9%, following a 6.4% increase in October), with double-digit losses in two of the five major commodity groups.

Canadian exports (–6.8%) fell for the fourth consecutive month in November as most principal commodity groups posted decreases, most notably energy products (–19.4%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

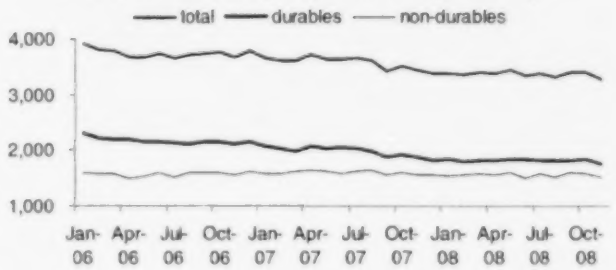
- **BC room revenues continued to trend downward in September (–2.8%, seasonally adjusted).** An increase (+5.2%) in Northeast was offset by declines in Vancouver Island/Coast (–1.9%), Nechako (–2.0%), Cariboo (-2.4%), Thompson/Okanagan (–2.4%), Kootenay (–2.5%), North Coast (-2.6%), and Mainland/Southwest (–3.8%). Revenues at all types of accommodation slipped in September, including hotels (–3.3%), motels (–1.2%) and other types of accommodation (–4.0%), such as vacation rentals, fishing lodges, and bed-and-breakfasts. *Data Source: BC Stats*

- **On average, consumer prices in BC rose 2.1% in 2008 compared to the previous year.** Higher energy prices (+9.5%) were the main contributors, particularly fuel oil (+25.7%), gasoline (+12.5%) and natural gas (+6.7%). Food prices rose an average of 3.3% in 2008. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Manufacturing sales in BC fell 3.6% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November.** While sales of manufactured food products were higher for a third straight month (+2.6%), a sharp decline in shipments of paper products (–11.4%) helped drive total receipts for non-durables 3.3% lower. High inventories, weaker prices and lower demand from the US continue to put pressure on the province's wood products industry where shipments have dropped 9.6% since the previous month. This, coupled with flagging sales of primary (–5.8%) and fabricated (–3.4%) metals, resulted in a 3.9% reduction in the value of durable goods shipped.

Nationally, sales decreased (–6.4%) for a fourth consecutive month to a near five-year low. Sales of petroleum & coal products fell 20.6%, largely driven by the significant drop in prices in recent months. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

BC Manufacturing Shipments SA ($millions)



- **Continuing its slide which started in the summer, retail sales in BC slipped 3.1% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November, the largest monthly decline since March 2003.** The sharp drop in sales was primarily a result of a rapid downturn in sales from the province's gasoline stations (–16.6%) triggered by the recent plummet in global oil prices. The automotive sector as a whole recorded an 8.2% drop in receipts. Four other retail groups registered lower sales figures in November including pharmacies, general merchandisers, food retailers and miscellaneous. Building & outdoor home suppliers, furniture, home furnishings & electronics stores and clothing & accessory shops all made minor gains.

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **Wholesale sales in BC slipped for the second straight month, down 1.3% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November with weaker figures reported in most sectors.** While the food sector saw receipts inch ahead 1.5%, many others, including the motor vehicle (–4.4%), lumber & millwork (–3.3%), and machinery & equipment (–3.0%) sectors saw sales drop sharply.

Source: Statistics Canada

MONTHLY STATISTICS

	UNITS	REFERENCE PERIOD	CURRENT			MONTHLY AVERAGE YEAR-TO-DATE	
			LATEST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM LAST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO	AMOUNT	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO
PRICES							
Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	Dec '08	111.4	-0.8	1.2	112.3	2.1
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	Dec '08	111.9	-0.9	1.3	112.8	2.3
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	Dec '08	111.0	-0.8	1.2	111.8	1.8
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	Dec '08	113.3	-0.7	1.2	114.1	2.4
Consumer Price Index-USA	1982-84=100	Dec '08	210.2	-1.0	0.1	215.3	3.8
Industry Price Index-Canada	1997=100	Dec '08	117.4	-1.9	2.5	120.6	4.3
LABOUR							
Unemployment Rate (SA)*-BC	Percent	Dec '08	5.3	(4.9)	(4.2)	4.5	(4.2)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-Canada	Percent	Dec '08	6.6	(6.3)	(6.0)	6.1	(6.0)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-USA	Percent	Dec '08	7.2	(6.8)	(4.9)	5.8	(4.6)
Unemployed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Dec '08	129.7	9.0	28.9	110.0	9.9
Employed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Dec '08	2,302.9	-0.3	0.4	2,315.3	2.1
Labour Force (SA)-BC	Thousand	Dec '08	2,432.6	0.1	1.6	2,425.3	2.5
Participation Rate (SA)-BC	Percent	Dec '08	66.2	(66.2)	(66.4)	66.6	(66.3)
Regular EI Benefits Paid	$Million	Nov '08	73.1	43.9	49.2	65.5	15.1
Regular EI Beneficiaries	Persons	Nov '08	47,780	23.8	24.8	44,005	9.2
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	Dec '08	796.71	0.9	5.4	780.90	4.4
Wages and Salaries-BC (SA)	$Million	Sep '08	7,720.7	0.6	6.3	7,624.6	6.4
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC	1996=100	Nov '08	122.4	1.4	2.9	120.4	3.4
PRODUCTION - BC							
Lumber-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Nov '08	2,156.4	-16.4	-16.6	2,416.6	-23.0
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '08	258	-9.2	-26.7	336	-14.4
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '08	44	-2.2	-13.7	51	-28.8
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '08	150	-13.3	-9.6	160	0.1
Coal-Tonnes	Thousand	Oct '08	2,086.0	0.1	-2.4	2,264.0	3.9
Oil-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Sep '08	113.7	-1.7	-4.8	112.3	-13.9
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres	Million	Feb '08	2,461.2	-14.4	0.6	2,667.8	4.7
Electric Power Generated	GW.h	Oct '08	6,224.8	30.4	2.4	5,460.7	-7.1
Manufacturing Shipments (SA)	$Million	Nov '08	3,277.7	-3.6	-4.6	3,369.5	-6.3
GENERAL							
Housing Starts-All Areas BC(SAAR)**	Thousand	Dec '08	23.1	8.5	-33.6	34.3	-12.8
Housing Starts-USA (SAAR)**	Thousand	Dec '08	550.0	-15.5	-45.0	902.0	-32.7
Building Permits-BC (SA)	$Million	Nov '08	607.1	-28.9	-32.6	925.6	-11.4
Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Nov '08	323.0	-22.9	-47.3	608.3	-15.0
Non-Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Nov '08	284.1	-34.6	-1.2	317.3	-3.6
Retail Sales (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Nov '08	4,542.9	-3.1	-5.1	4,749.1	1.4
Wholesale Trade (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Nov '08	4,413.4	-1.3	-2.7	4,420.1	-1.2
Tourism Room Revenues (SA)-BC	$Thousand	Sep '08	158,885	-2.8	-4.6	165,563	1.8
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Nov '08	30	-26.8	-34.8	38	-4.4
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Nov '08	715	-4.0	23.3	601	7.1
Incorporations-BC	Number	May '08	2,508	-8.2	-13.1	2,543	-2.3
Exports Originating in BC (SA)	$Million	Nov '08	2,915.1	-4.3	14.3	2,776.8	4.7

January 29, 2009

*SA indicates seasonal adjustment.

**SAAR indicates seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Brackets () indicate that rates are shown instead of percentage changes.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

	UNITS	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
		2008	2007	2006	2005	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-20
PRICES								
Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	112.3	110.0	108.1	106.3	2.1	1.8	1.7
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	112.8	110.2	108.0	106.0	2.4	2.0	1.9
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	111.8	109.8	108.5	106.9	1.8	1.2	1.5
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	114.1	111.5	109.1	107.0	2.3	2.2	2.0
Consumer Price Index-USA*	1982-84=100	215.3	207.3	201.6	195.3	3.8	2.9	3.2
Industry Price Index-Canada*	1997=100	120.6	115.6	113.8	111.2	4.3	1.6	2.3
LABOUR								
Unemployment Rate-BC	Percent	4.6	4.2	4.8	5.9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-Canada	Percent	6.1	6.0	6.3	6.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-USA*	Percent	5.8	4.6	4.6	5.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployed-BC	Thousand	111.6	100.0	109.6	132.9	11.6	-8.8	-17.5
Employed-BC	Thousand	2,314.3	2,266.3	2,195.5	2,130.5	2.1	3.2	3.1
Labour Force-BC	Thousand	2,425.9	2,366.4	2,305.1	2,263.4	2.5	2.7	1.8
Participation Rate-BC	Percent	66.6	66.3	65.7	65.6	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	-	1,562.7	1,564.2	1,650.3	-	-0.1	-5.2
Regular EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	-	694.3	723.7	837.4	-	-4.1	-13.6
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	780.85	747.84	726.02	704.49	4.4	3.0	3.1
Wages and Salaries-BC*	$Million	-	86,781.2	81,623.0	74,454.9	-	6.3	9.6
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC*	1996=100	-	116.8	112.8	109.0	-	3.5	3.5
PRODUCTION - BC								
Lumber-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	-	36,677.3	41,050.7	41,012.9	-	-10.7	0
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	4,717	4,736	4,932	-	-0.4	-4.0
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	846	1,059	1,076	-	-20.1	-1.6
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	1,917	1,960	1,877	-	-2.2	4.4
Coal-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	25,941.0	23,161.0	26,718.0	-	12.0	-13.3
Oil-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	-	1,529.2	1,670.6	1,765.7	-	-8.5	-5.4
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres*	Million	-	31,658.2	35,291.7	31,892.8	-	-10.3	10.7
Electric Power Generated*	GW.h	-	72,217.0	62,021.4	67,811.2	-	16.4	-8.5
Solid Mineral Shipments	$Million	-	5,671.6	5,990.6	4,924.8	-	-5.3	21.6
Farm Cash Receipts**	$Million	-	2,415.6	2,288.6	2,372.5	-	5.5	-3.5
Manufacturing Shipments*	$Million	-	42,929.5	44,943.9	42,983.8	-	-4.5	4.6
GENERAL								
Housing Starts-All Areas BC**	Thousand	34.3	39.2	36.4	34.7	-12.4	7.6	5.1
Housing Starts-USA	Thousand	904.3	1,355.0	1,800.9	2,068.3	-33.3	-24.8	-12.9
Building Permits-BC*	$Million	-	12,544.7	11,541.5	10,182.9	-	8.7	13.3
Residential-BC*	$Million	-	8,611.7	7,620.7	6,970.8	-	13.0	9.3
Non-Residential-BC*	$Million	-	3,933.0	3,920.8	3,212.1	-	0.3	22.1
Retail Sales (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	-	56,365.4	52,837.1	49,286.3	-	6.7	7.2
Wholesale Trade (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	-	53,547.7	49,328.3	45,447.4	-	8.6	8.5
Tourism Room Revenues-BC*	$Thousand	-	1,968.1	1,815.3	1,688.3	-	8.4	7.5
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	-	470	587	786	-	-19.9	-25.3
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	-	6,650	7,021	8,173	-	-5.3	-14.1
Incorporations-BC*	Number	-	30,841	30,667	28,593	-	0.6	7.3
Exports Originating in BC*	$Million	-	31,559.3	33,468.2	34,167.3	-	-5.7	-2.0
Capital Expenditures-BC	$Million	44,030.2	42,086.1	39,912.2	33,254.2	4.6	5.4	20
Population-BC (as at July 1)	Thousands of Persons	4,381,603	4,310,305	4,243,580	4,196,788	1.7	1.6	1.1

* derived from monthly figures
**derived from quarterly figures

dash (-) indicates not available

n/a = not applicable

January 29, 2009

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
	2007	2006	2005	2004	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
BRITISH COLUMBIA (Millions $Cdn) *Nov. 2008*							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	192,528	182,743	169,308	157,675	5.4	7.9	7.4
Real Gross Domestic Product **(chained 2002 $)**	164,583	159,733	152,998	146,541	3.0	4.4	4.4
CANADA (Millions $Cdn) *Nov. 2008*							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	1,535,646	1,450,490	1,372,626	1,290,906	5.9	5.7	6.3
Real GDP at Market Prices **(chained 2002 $)**	1,319,681	1,284,819	1,246,064	1,211,239	2.7	3.1	2.9
UNITED STATES (Billions $US) **							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	13,807.5	13,178.4	12,421.9	11,685.9	4.8	6.1	6.3
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2000 $US)	11,523.9	11,294.8	10,989.5	10,675.8	2.0	2.8	2.9

*** US Department of Commerce (actual) July 2008*

INTEREST AND EXCHANGE RATES

(Source: Bank of Canada)

	Jan. 28/09	Jan. 21/09	Dec. 24/08	Jan. 30/08
	PERCENT PER ANNUM			
CANADA				
Prime Business Rate	3.00	3.00	3.50	5.75
Bank Rate	1.25	1.25	1.75	4.25
Marketable Government Bond Rate (over 10 years)	3.74	3.65	3.53	4.17
Conventional Mortgages - 1 Year	5.00	5.00	5.60	7.35
- 5 Years	5.79	5.79	6.75	7.39
UNITED STATES				
Prime Rate	3.25	3.25	3.25	6.00
EXCHANGE RATES	AVERAGE NOON SPOT RATE			
US Dollar	1.2098	1.2741	1.2125	0.9937
Japanese Yen	0.0135	0.0145	0.0134	0.0093
UK Pound Sterling	1.7318	1.7488	1.7788	1.9754
European Euro	1.6021	1.6395	1.6930	1.4688

FORECASTS

	Real GDP			Unemployment Rate		Consumer Price Index	
	2008	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
	% Change	% Change	% Change	%	%	% Change	% Change
BRITISH COLUMBIA							
BC Government (September 2008, 1st Quarterly Rpt)	1.7	2.3	2.9	4.4	4.5	2.0	2.1
Central 1 Credit Union (January 2009)	1.3	-1.0	2.0	6.7	7.5	0.8	1.3
Conference Board of Canada (January 2009)	1.2	1.8	3.3	5.4	5.1	2.2	1.8
Scotia Bank Group (December 17, 2008)	1.5	-0.4	2.6	5.6	5.4	-	-
TD Bank (December 23, 2008)	1.4	-1.0	3.6	5.3	6.0	0.4	2.8
CIBC WM Economics (November 28, 2008)	1.5	1.5	-	5.2	-	2.3	-
Global Insight (January 2009)	1.6	-0.3	2.7	5.6	6	1.1	2.2
CANADA							
TD Bank (December 10, 2008)	0.7	-1.4	2.4	7.7	8.3	0.5	1.6
CIBC WM Economics (January 23, 2009)	0.6	-0.5	1.8	7.6	7.9	1.0	3.3
Global Insight (January 2009)	0.7	-1.5	2.5	7.6	7.9	1.0	2.1
UNITED STATES							
TD Bank (December 10, 2008)	1.1	-2.0	2.7	8.4	8.8	0.5	1.4
CIBC WM Economics (January 23, 2009)	1.2	-0.9	1.9	7.9	8.4	0.2	4.2
Global Insight (January 2009)	1.2	-2.5	2.2	8.5	9.1	-2.2	2.4

dash (-) indicates not available

January 29, 2009